

## Thought for the Day

*Thought for the day is based on one of the day's lectionary readings.*

*For the Bible online, go to: <http://bible.oremus.org/>*

*Choose your version (we use NRSV in church)*

*Copy and paste the reference into the search box and the passage will be displayed.*

Saturday 18 April

1 Corinthians 15.51-end

*'Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.'*

This passage is the end of a long chapter in which Paul discusses the whole topic of resurrection, dealing along the way with some sceptical views about life after death. It's worth a read. In this final paragraph he strikes a triumphant note, based on the resurrection of Jesus, and claims the promise that we too will rise. There is no need, then, to fear death, for death is not the end.

If I can risk a pun about this rather serious subject, I remember a pupil once writing in their exam 'death is not a full stop, it's a coma'. I was quite sure she actually meant 'it's a comma', but I had to smile. Death is real – Jesus' death was real, and so is ours, unlike a coma, which may appear like death – but the resurrection life that follows is also real. Paul has explained meticulously that our present physical body will not survive and would be no good anyway in another existence. We will be given the right kind of body at that time, imperishable. No point speculating about what that could be, just as a caterpillar can have no concept of how it will change into a butterfly. We have to wait and see. But the point is that death does not have the last word, it is not the end. Paul used the language of his time – when the trumpet sounds, the troops march into action. So we imagine the angels with their trumpets, calling the dead to life. Do you know the great trumpet passage in Verdi's Requiem? Trumpets far and near, calling, calling. I find that spine chilling in a wonderful way and I want it played at my funeral, by the way, please!

It was not easy for Paul to write this, to hold this faith. He was threatened with death constantly. It was a daily possibility for him. He could not be blasé about this faith. But clearly it sustained him, and it can sustain us, in these days of tragic illness and premature sudden death. *Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy in this time of uncertainty and distress.  
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful, and lift up all who are brought low;  
that we may rejoice in your comfort,  
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love  
in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.*